

Optional Goal: Sound Mixing and Editing with Audacity

Overview: Imagine that you have a little brother or sister (or cousin, niece, or nephew) about 5 years old. The youngster can't sleep at night unless YOU read the story...but you can't be there every night. You have homework, basketball, and art classes to go to! So you will record the kid's favourite story (complete with voices, soothing background music, sound effects, etc), so you can get some "hanging out with my buds" time once in a while. The younger person is learning how to read, so wants to follow along in the book. Remember to insert a signal of some kind so the kid will know when to turn the page.

Requirements:

Your school computer contains a program called "Audacity," which can be used to record, edit, mix, layer, and otherwise manipulate sound. You will use Audacity to do the following:

- Record a reading of a children's story
- Add quiet, instrumental-only "sleepy time" music to the background
- Add sound effects to the story
- Manipulate the voice (if necessary), to add depth, or individuality, to characters
- Add a "turn the page" signal when the reader reaches the end of a page
- Cut out mistakes, coughs, throat-clearings, and other distractions

Steps:

1. Find a tutorial for Audacity 2.0.3 online (there's a good one at <http://manual.audacityteam.org/o/index.html>, but the one for the original Audacity (<http://audacity.sourceforge.net/manual-1.2/tutorials.html>) is actually more helpful for the sound effects and so on). Bookmark it (or download it).
2. Choose a children's book (in English) to use for this Optional Goal. Remember that you must add sound effects and so on...so choose a book that will lend itself to this. You may choose to use a picture book (like *Curious George* or *The Cat in the Hat*, for example), or you may instead want to read one or two chapters from a young-reader chapter book (like, for example *Little House on the Prairie*, *Charlotte's Web*, or *James and the Giant Peach*). The book selection is totally up to you and your little kid (if yours isn't imaginary).
3. Practice reading the book (or the chapter) out loud. You will want to read smoothly and with feeling, and perhaps use different voices for the different characters. You may want to photocopy the pages (so you can write on them or highlight them), or type up a script for yourself. When you're ready, record yourself reading the book.
4. Use Audacity to manipulate the sound and accomplish all the required elements.
5. Save your story in one of the following formats: .asx, .wm, .wma, .wmx, .wav, .mp3, m3u, or .aac. Be sure to give it a clear filename and give credit to the original author of the book and the musical artist for the background music (and anyone who helped you...think of movie credits...list everyone!)
6. Export and embed your story in your e-portfolio, along with the reflections piece.

Done?

When your Audacity Sound Mixing and Editing Optional Goal is completed, be sure to complete the reflections piece and post both of them in your e-portfolio. Let me know (via the form on the wiki), so that I can go take a look and assess the project.

There is no minimum or maximum length for this project. Just be sure that you have done at least the required elements. Extras are optional.